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EMBLEMATIC MOUNDS AND ANIMAL EFFIGIES. By *Stephen D. Peet*. Chicago: American Antiquarian office.

The author of this work is well known, not only as the editor of the *American Antiquarian*, but as a careful explorer of aboriginal monuments in the Northwest. His attention has not been limited, however, to the results of personal observation; he has utilised the researches of other explorers, and is thus able to present to his readers an amazing amount of information, which is rendered doubly valuable by the profuse use of maps and illustrations. The points which Mr. Peet has sought to bring out in his book are, that (1) the works described as effigies were imitations of the wild animals which were once common in the region where they are found, which is chiefly in Wisconsin and Ohio, and were also totemic in their character; (2) the effigies were used for practical purposes, such as screens for hunters, guards for villages, foundations for houses, heaps on which sentinels were stationed; (3) they embodied "certain superstitions and customs which are rarely found, but which are suggestive of the religious system prevalent in prehistoric times."

The consideration of the first and second of these points does not come within our province, but it will be interesting to see what light the curious monuments described throw on the religious ideas of the aborigines. Mr. Peet states that the location of the effigies gives the idea of the prevalence among their builders of a kind of nature-worship. They are closely associated with the natural features of the earth, "the streams and lakes, hills and valleys, woods and prairies," being overshadowed by them. The animals represented were divinities to the people, and the effigies were intended to be symbols of such divinities, associated for particular reasons with special localities. In support of this view, Mr. Peet refers to the fact that the "myths which fix upon scenes in nature are those which remind one of the animal divinities which were worshipped. The figure of the moose and the turtle and other animals have been recognised in certain strange and contorted figures in the rocks and mountains, and myths have been connected with them, the myth having evidently been made to account for the resemblances." The most remarkable example of this kind is the great serpent mound of Adams County, Ohio. Serpent mounds are found in various other localities, and usually they correspond with the natural features of the ground on which they are placed.

But if the effigies are to be regarded as symbols of a totemic animal-worship, it may be thought that they cannot be taken as evidence of the existence of nature-worship. Mr. Peet remarks, however, that the symbolism of Ohio was that of sun-worship, and the existence of this phase of nature-worship among the American aborigines is an important fact. It connects their religious ideas with those which were at one time almost universally prevalent in the Old World. The Sun as the source of life and energy was from an early date the object round which centered the religious ideas of the ancient world, and the serpent occupied a chief place as symbolical of the most important of those ideas. The veneration for deceased ancestors represented similar ideas with those embodied in sun-worship, and the animal

totemism of which the effigy mounds are symbolic was connected with the latter superstition through ancestral worship, the mythical ancestor being identified with the totem. If this is so, the study of the mythology of the aboriginal inhabitants of this country may be expected to throw light on the origin of Old World superstitions, and Mr. Peet may be congratulated on having done so much to make known the symbolical and other works which will soon be the only relics of an ancient and wide-spread race. Ω.

LIFE. By *M. J. Savage*. Boston : Geo. H. Ellis.

In this volume of sermons we have a most interesting series of studies on a subject which is probably attracting at the present time more intelligent interest than at any past epoch. The views entertained by Mr. Savage are so well known that it is not necessary to give any elaborate review of the present work. Among other themes he treats of the Nature and Origin of Life, Goodness and Moral Evil, Life's Meaning, Nationalism and other social dreams, Morality and Religion. Everywhere we find much material for thought, and, although from the very nature of the case many of Mr. Savage's conclusions will not be generally accepted, his words will be read with more than a passing interest.

His statement that right and wrong "are to be understood by studying the progress, the development, of the race, just as we find out any other truth," cannot well be contested by the advocate of any ethical theory. When he affirms this life "to be only manifestations as the years go by, out-blossomings everywhere of that life which is God,—the mystery and yet the explanation of all things," he expresses an opinion that most men who have given the subject serious thought will accept—subject only to the reservation that they are allowed to understand "God" in their own way.

The answer given by Mr. Savage, in his concluding discourse, to the question "What is it all for?" will meet with less acceptance. He remarks that all the theories which can be found as to the outcome of things are only variations of three chief theories: (1) that of a future life of rewards and punishments, the theory of Milton's "Paradise Lost"; (2) that of M. Comte, which is well named the religion of humanity; (3) that which regards *spirit* as having the pre-eminence over matter. As to the first theory, Mr. Savage declares it to be condemned by the intellect, the heart, and the conscience of men. He affirms that the second theory ends in *nothing*, and he endorses the statement of Mr. John Fiske, that "considered intellectually, such a theory puts the world to permanent intellectual confusion." Mr. Savage, therefore, accepts the third theory which "makes immortality a wholly rational thought." He sees the proof of it in the existence of the brain, the conscience, the heart of man, which "are prophecies, since they are the expression of the nature of things, and since they demand the perfect thought, and love, and right." Ω.